

Frequently asked questions about the MUSC Microbiology and Immunology Masters Program:

What degree is awarded at graduation?

The degree awarded is “Master of Science in Biomedical Sciences.”

How long does it take and what does it involve?

Our masters program takes 24-27 months on average and has minimal and flexible (12 credit hours) course requirements. Most of your time is spent on a laboratory research project, including writing and defending a thesis, with a faculty mentor. As a student you will be required to give two public presentations of your work in the department, including your thesis defense. Please see the Program Faculty link for a list of Microbiology and Immunology faculty and brief descriptions of their research interests. This is the list of faculty mentors and their availability is indicated in the right hand column. Your thesis project will need to be related to the research of one of these mentors.

What are the application requirements and prerequisites?

All applicants must have at least a bachelor's degree. We look for students with undergraduate coursework in the sciences, but there are no specific requirements. In general, applicants should have a General GRE test score (V+Q) at or above the 70th percentile, and a minimum undergraduate GPA of 3.0. The subject GRE is not required. For applicants from non-English speaking Institutions, a TOEFFL score of 100 (online format) is required. Application to the program also requires transcripts from all institutions attended and three letters of reference. It is recommended that you identify faculty members that you think you would like to work with (potential thesis mentors) in your personal statement in your application. It is best to name several, as not all labs are available every year. You do *not* need to contact these faculty or get their permission. In the first semester, all students do laboratory rotations in 2 -3 labs in order to find the one that is best for them. All applications must be submitted online (www.musc.edu/em/admissions/apply.htm).

How big is the program?

Currently we have 9 masters students enrolled and we have been averaging 4 new enrollees and 4 graduates per year. There are also 19 PhD and MD/PhD students in the program, who share some classes with masters students.

What does it cost and are there stipends?

Tuition and fees for 2011-2012 are \$6426 *per semester* for full-time South Carolina residents and \$10,028 for out-of-state residents. There are no stipends available for masters students. Full-time status is required for financial aid. Please be advised that the graduate program, while somewhat flexible with regard to exact hours, is a full-time commitment. Once you have chosen a specific mentor, you should expect to spend 40 hours per week in the lab, working on your project during normal business hours for the lab you have chosen. Research is time consuming!

What does the masters program prepare you for? Most students in the program are using it as a stepping stone to medical or dental school, or a PhD program. Others become lab technicians or study coordinators in academia or industry, but a masters degree is not necessary for such a position. The Masters in Biomedical Sciences improves your competitiveness in the job market, but it does not certify you for any particular employment.

When will I hear if I am accepted? Our online application is open from October 1st until June 1st. We will not be making any decisions this year until late March 2012, and some may be later.